Table 40. Land ownership and quality of land. Gozo.

Percentage of total agricultural land.

423*

	Civil Govnmt.	War Dept.	Church etc.	Private Landlord	Owner Occupier	Total %	Total 000 tm.
(a) Cultivated land							
1891	18.0		8.4	67.7		94.1	37
1901	21.1		11.3	62.8		95.2	32
1951	83.4				9.5	92.9	
1952	84.6				8.8	93.4	
(b) Uncultivated land							
1891	0.6		0.2	3.1 (1.1*)		3.9	2
1901	0.6		0.6	3.7		4.8	2
1951	6.6				0.5	7.1	
1952	6.2				0.2	6.4	
(c) Agricultural land							
1891	18.6		8.6	72.8		100	40
1901	21.6		11.8	66.5		99.9	33
1951	90.0				10.0	100	36
1952	91.1				8.9	100	38

*Ownership 'indefinite' - excluded from totals.

time, ownership would change. Since 1947, the existence of savings amassed during the price boom of World War II and the granting of old-age pensions have together encouraged the farmer to retire at an earlier age from active management and, through various crop-sharing agreements, to divide the usufruct with heirs, relations and friends. New types of tenure ensuring security to the original owner and opportunity to others are of considerable significance. Thus, over a short period of time simple freehold may be replaced by other legal situations although the *de facto* position of owner-occupied land as a whole remains unchanged. [454] [745]

Increasing accuracy of classification may correct these and other discrepancies but may in itself and as a result of such corrections introduce apparent fluctuations in general trends. Thus, because it is reasonable to assume that the most recent figures are most likely to be accurate, minor trends culminating in recent records should be ignored. 423* 129

Thus it is that, in the absence of external evidence, we may say that increases in the actual or proportional areas of land owned by Church and State have been insignificant. Table 41 shows in round figures the probable proportions of land owned by the various groups, based on various sources and broadly correct for the years around 1950. We are satisfied that this gives a more accurate picture than that usually presented.

The character of ownership and its effects on land use must also be related to the character of the land itself. Tables 39 and 40 show, among other features, the growing amount of 'wasteland' which now makes up some 15 per cent. of the so-called farmed area of Malta, and a lesser proportion of Gozo. This 'waste' is mainly marginal land which bears clear traces of earlier cultivation. True 'wasteland', virgin karst or long-abandoned, has always been excluded from the total figure. 423*

It has been suggested that such figures show that freehold property (in which the farmer might be expected to have the greatest interest) is most likely to

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 303]

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

occupations, 52 per cent are service personnel and skilled workers, 27 per cent are unskilled and semi-skilled labourers and 14 per cent are engaged in agriculture. Just over two-thirds of the total are employed outside the village. The majority of these, as in Farrug, work in the Grand Harbour industrial area. Those who work in the village are for the most part self-employed. They are farmers, shopkeepers, blacksmiths and carpenters.

In Table No. 1 I have compared the various occupational classes in Kortin and Farrug to each other and to the national figures.

III

Most villages look very much alike. Their magnificent baroque churches provide a startling contrast to the low, flat-roofed houses grouped tightly around them. As the parish church towers over the village, so it dominates it socially, for the church is in every sense the centre around which the life of the village revolves. In front of the church there is usually a large square, the *misrah* or *pjazza*, which is the social centre of the village. Various village clubs and lay societies, as well as the police station, are situated on the *pjazza*, or just off it, as are the principal wine shops, the government dispensary and the finest houses of the village. As the square is usually the terminal point of the local bus line, it is the point at which most people enter and leave the village. It is also the stage on which the principal events of village life take place: the annual feast, or *festa*, of the patron saint, the many religious processions and the occasional political rallies. On Sundays, and especially during the long summer evenings, the square teems with groups of men, who sit about on steps and benches, talking and arguing for hours on end. During weekday mornings, it belongs to the old men of the village, now freed by government old age pensions from the backbreaking toil in the fields that was the lot of their forefathers.

Each village is first and foremost a community of neighbours. Even the smallest of them have distinct residential groups, the members of which are in closer contact with each other than with people living in other parts of the village. This is, of course, particularly true of the larger villages. But even in Farrug, a village of about 1,400, the extremities of the village and the various streets and alleys form separate neighbourhoods. The many little shops